

July 3, 2008

A.G. Kawamura, Secretary
California Department of Food and Agriculture
1220 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Secretary A.G. Kawamura and Board,

I would like thank you for the opportunity to give input to help design California's agricultural future through 2030. I would like to share my thoughts and observations.

The Ag Vision session in San Luis Obispo was quite informative and interesting. I have been a farmer in California for twenty eight years and have seen many changes in that period of time. I have been involved in the produce industry for most of those twenty eight years in Salinas and the Santa Maria Valley. I have witnessed a financial crash in 1985 in Salinas to a drought in the Santa Maria Valley in the late 1980's. I have operated under a UFW and Teamsters contracts to currently non contract conditions.

Our agricultural community has survived through all these tough times. Farmers and ranchers are very adoptive and resilient to tough times and will continue to survive into the future. I feel that farmers and ranchers need to be able to communicate their story better to the urban community, but understand their apprehension to do so. My vision of 2030 would be one of trust between urban and the rural community from food sources and a clarification of food safety issues. In a global market, we need to be able to better communicate our problems and have a clear understanding of the objectives we are trying to achieve locally, in the state and the world.

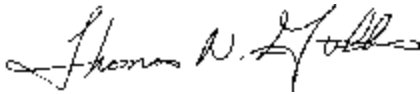
I feel the biggest point agricultural will need to overcome is the mountain of regulation which face California farming and ranching today. The slate includes water wavier and this is still evolving and only stands to become more interesting in 2009, when the renewal process takes place. The air resources board also has a dynamic process from registration of our booster pumps to tightening of the standards on milling facilities for dust particles. The retrofit of older diesel trucks in 2009 and again in 2012 at a large cost to the agricultural community. Many other issues as endangered species and the regulations from Fish and Wildlife to Army Corps of Engineers and their interpretations of current and new laws that affect our agriculture process. The one question I have is when legislation is enacted to regulate agriculture, when and how will the agriculture community be able to turn around said legislation if found to have detrimental effect on the agriculture industry?

The other thought is, there were several statements made yesterday about heat related illness and pesticide exposure and how growers were neglectful in the care and relationships with their employees. I find these statements totally untrue, as all of our

employees are more valuable than any input to our operations. I also understand that was hype yesterday, but I understand reputations and the purpose of being truthful when making public statements. This is one of the questions raised for your session and one that has been problematic to agriculture as long as I can remember. I think its time for California agriculture to stand up and speak out for ourselves and not to be afraid to do so. We are only 11/2 to 2 percent of the population in California and quickly declining because the state of agriculture is perceived as a bad apple. If we are to survive until 2030, we need to be able to communicate our industry goals to all avenues as precisely and clearly as possible to avoid any future misunderstandings.

Again, I thank you for allowing our comments on such an important subject.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas N. Gibbons". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Thomas N. Gibbons
President
Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau